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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to communicate my support for HB 7020, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Educators and Initiatives. Specifically, I feel very strongly that the Office of Early Childhood should provide funding to local and regional early childhood councils. I am a member of Mansfield Advocates for Children, a beneficiary of state funds that currently support a grant from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. I believe that Mansfield parents- and by extension, the whole community- benefits enormously from the programs and services that these funds make possible. For example, I am the General Coordinator of a committee that is building a community playground in Mansfield. The playground will be largely accessible to disabled children and caretakers; situated on the busline for lower income families; and will be built by the community in a show of community connectedness. This project has already brought residents together through fundraising events such as Easter Egg hunts and 5k races, and once built will be a place for kids to exercise outdoors and for parents to make friends and seek support.

The Mansfield Community Playground is an initiative of Mansfield Advocates for Children, and would not be possible without MAC. We rely on MAC for our tax-exempt status (obviating the need for the time consuming and expensive process of forming a tax-exempt entity), for administrative support (mailing fundraising letters, accepting RSVPs, etc.), and for ideas and volunteers. MAC serves many purposes and helps in many respects, including bringing together school, library, parent, and health perspectives. To me, however, the playground and its myriad benefits show why we need to maintain funding for this important resource.

I sincerely hope that the legislature will support this bill. Mansfield needs MAC, and I would love other communities to reap the benefits of this funding as we have.

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